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S E R M O N

Preach'd at the Parish-Church of

St. Mary White-Chapel,

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Tuesday, October II. 1709.

At the FUNERAL of

Dame *MARY COOKE*,

Late W I F E of

Sir *John Cooke*, of Doctor's-Commons,
London, Knight, Doctor of LAWS, &c.

By *SAMUEL CLARK*, D. D.
Rector of St. James Westminster, and Chap-
lain in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

Publish'd at the Request of Her Relations

L O N D O N:

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2 Cor. V. 8.

We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord.

TH E Apostle in the foregoing Chapter declares at large how the Assurance of a Resurrection from the Dead, not only enabl'd him to perform cheerfully all the Duties of a Christian Life, but supported him also, so as not to faint under, the severest Persecutions, which continually threatned him even with Death it self. *Therefore---- as we have receiv'd Mercy, saith he, we faint not, ver. 1. We are troubl'd on every side, yet not distress'd; we are perplex'd, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroy'd, v. 8, 9. The ground of which Comfort and Support, he exprest, v. 10. Always bearing about in the Body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the Life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal Flesh; for we which live, are always deliver'd unto Death for Jesus sake, that the Life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal Flesh. And more clearly, v. 13, 14. Having the same Spirit and Faith ---, and knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up Us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. After which he returns to the Inference he began with in the first Verse, v. 15. For which Cause we faint not, but tho' our outward Man perish, yet the inward Man is renew'd day by day, for our light Affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight*

of Glory; while we look not at the Things which are seen, but at the Things which are not seen; for the Things which are seen, are Temporal; but the Things which are not seen, are Eternal.

From this general Consideration of the Certainty of a future Life, as a ground of Support and Comfort under the Troubles of the present; we proceed in the beginning of the fifth Chapter, to consider the particular Nature of that Body we shall be cloth'd withal at the Resurrection; and of that intermedate State, the Soul will find itself in, between Death and Judgment. As to the Nature of our future Body, he tells us, *v. 1.* that whereas our present Body is an *earthly House*, Building fram'd out of the most perishable Materials, and of a Texture most frail and brittle; a *Tabernacle* tending perpetually in its own Nature to a gradual decay towards a *Dissolution*, and, during that short Period which it is capable of continuing, being every moment liable to be destroy'd by sudden Violence, by the Power of Men, and the Assaults of acute Diseases; the Body we shall have hereafter, shall on the contrary be a *Building of God, an House not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens*; a Body, fram'd immediately by God himself, made capable of induring for ever, and fitted to the Circumstances and Injoyments of that Place, which God has provided for us in the Heavens.

The frequent Meditation upon which happy State, causes good Men to grone earnestly, *v. 2.* desiring to be cloth'd upon with our House which is from Heaven; if so be that being cloth'd, we shall not be found naked; for we that are in this Tabernacle do

grone, being burden'd; not for that we would be un-
 cloth'd, but cloth'd upon, that Mortality might be swal-
 low'd up of Life. This Passage some understand to
 refer to what the same Apostle informs us of in the
 15th Chapter of his foregoing Epistle, concerning
 those who shall be found alive at our Lord's se-
 cond coming; that they shall not *die*, but be
 changed; not be *uncloth'd* of this mortal Body, but
 cloth'd upon with their heavenly Habitation; and
 that the Apostle here expresses a desire of escaping
 Death, and of being found among those, who
 without becoming naked, without being separated
 from the Body at all, shall in a moment, in the twink-
 ling of an Eye, be changed or clothed upon with an
 immortal and incorruptible Body. But there is
 need of interpreting the Words to this Sense. For
 when the Apostle affirms that we are desirous, not
 to be *uncloth'd*, but to be *cloth'd upon*; not to be
 found naked, but to be cloth'd upon with our House
 which is from Heaven; he does indeed prefer our
 State after the Resurrection, to the State of Sepa-
 ration; and represents good Men wishing to be deli-
 ver'd from the Burden of the Flesh, not merely
 for the sake of being separate from the Body, but
 chiefly and principally in hopes of being clothed
 with a better and more glorious one: But yet
 does not therefore follow, that he meant to
 tend this Desire so far, as to the escaping of Death
 wholly, and avoiding the entering into the separate
 State at all; or that he thought this peculiar Cir-
 cumstance of those who shall be found alive at
 our Lord's second coming, could possibly be the Case
 of those who liv'd so early as in his own time.
 Nay rather the contrary seems clearly to follow.

from the 6th Verse, and from the Words of the Text; where he speaks of *being absent from the Body*, as of a thing that would certainly happen to them, and that was truly desirable to good Men, and the Expectation whereof was a ground of Confidence and Support under the Troubles of Life, and against the Fears of Death: For that though the State after the Resurrection, when we shall be cloth'd with incorruptible and immortal Bodies like unto our Saviour's glorious Body, shall be much more happy and desirable, than the State of Separation; yet that State of Separation it self, that imperfect and incomplete State, is far superior to our Condition in this World, and more eligible than the Burden of the present Flesh. *Therefore we are always confident, says he, knowing that whilst we are at home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord; (for we walk by Faith, not by Sight;) we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord.*

The Words are not well rendred, *whilst we are at home in the Body*; For this Body is not our proper Home; we are only Strangers and Pilgrims in the present World, and our Life is by St. Peter justly call'd, *The Time of our sojourning here*. But, whilst we dwell in the Body, (so the Words ought rather to be rendred,) or (as the same Word is translated in the following Verse,) *whilst we are absent in the Body*; whilst we continue in this World, we are *absent* from the Fountain of Life and Happiness; we are at a distance from the heavenly Jerusalem, which is our proper Country; we are *absent from the Lord*; and *live by Faith only, not by Sight*: But, God having given unto us the

earnest of his Holy Spirit, we are confident and have full Assurance of the Truth of these Things; we wean our selves therefore from the sensual Injoyments of the present World; we support and comfort our selves with these Meditations, under the Troubles of Life, and against the Fears of Death, we are willing rather to be absent from the Body, (whensoever it shall please God to release us;) and to be present with the Lord, which is far better.

In the Words, and in the Context, we may observe the following particulars plainly implied.

1st, That we must all shortly be *absent* or separate from this Body.

2^{dly}, That that State of Separation, is not a State of absolute Insensibility.

3^{dly}, That, to good Men, it is a State of great Happiness, a being *present with the Lord*.

4^{thly}, That the Consideration of that intermediate Happiness, is a great Comfort and Support against the Fear of Death. *We are confident, and willing rather to be absent from the Body.*

5^{thly} and Lastly, That that intermediate State tho' a state of Happiness, yet is by no means equal to that Happiness, which good Men shall be possess'd of after the Resurrection. *For we that are in this Tabernacle do groane, being burden'd; not for that we would be uncloth'd, but cloth'd upon, that Mortality might be swallow'd up of Life.*

1st, It is supposed in the Words, that we must all shortly be *absent* or separate from this Body. 'Tis evident there is no need to prove, and one would think there should be no need to remind Men, that they must all die; when they have every day such mournful Occasions as these, to excite

their Consideration. Yet so it is, that even this *very Thing*, the *Frequency* of other Examples, and the indisputable *Certainty* of their own Mortality, makes them stand in need of the more earnest Exhortations, to persuade them not to forget or neglect it. For, as the strongest Objects that make perpetually an equal and continu'd Impression upon our Senses, are apt, by reason of their constant presence, to affect us little more, than if they made no Impression upon the Sense at all; and as those great *Phænomena* of Nature, which we observe to return in the constant Course of every Day, excite in us less Admiration, tho' in themselves the most wonderful of all the Works of God, than much less remarkable Things, which appear but seldom: so the absolute *Certainty* of our own Mortality, which leave no room for Inquiry or Debate, makes Men almost as much lay aside the Thoughts of it, as if the *Certainty* were on the other side of the Question; and the *Frequency* of Instances which ought perpetually to remind us what we must speedily expect, does, by a strange Carelessness and habitual Neglect, reconcile Men in such manner to the sight of Mortality in others, as if they themselves were not concern'd in the Example. They shake off the Thoughts of it, as if there could be no Benefit in meditating upon what cannot be prevented; and look upon it as importune and troublesom to remind them of that, which it is not possible but they must already know. Yet that Knowledge, without Meditation, is like unto ignorance; because it has no Effect, and makes no Impression. It is like the speculative Knowledge of a Truth, which concerns us not; or like

the habitual Understanding of a Demonstration never recollected. The reason of this great Stupidity, seems to be the Uncertainty of the *Time* of every Man's Death; which makes Men look upon Life, as a long indefinite Period; and, because the *Time* of their Death is *uncertain*, it is to them as an *Uncertainty* in the *Thing* it self. To prevent this Folly therefore, the Scripture is perpetually reminding us, and putting us upon considering That our *Days on Earth* are as a *Shadow*, and there is no abiding, 1 Chron. 29. 15. That they are swifter than a Weaver's Shuttle, Job 7. 6. that they pass away swifter than a Post; that they flee away as the swift Ships, as the Eagle that hasteth to the Prey, Job 9. 26. that they are as *A sleep*, as a watch in the *Night*, as a Tale that is told, Ps. 90. 5, 4, 9. that our *Life* is a *Vapour*, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away, Jam. 4. 14. that *Man* cometh forth like a Flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also like a Shadow, and continueth not, Job 14. 2. In the Morning it flourisheth and groweth up, in the Evening it is cut down and withereth, Ps. 90. 6. All which Similitudes are elegantly sum'd up together by the Author of the Book of Wisdom: Wisd. 5. 9. All the things are passed away like a Shadow, and as a Post that is hasted by; and as a Ship that passeth over the Waves of the Water, which when it is gone by, the Trace thereof cannot be found, neither the Path way nor the Keel in the Waves; Or as when a Bird has flown thro' the Air, there is no Token of her Way to be found——; Or like as when an Arrow is shot at a Mark, it parteth the Air, which immediately comes together again, so that a Man cannot know where it went thro'; even so We in like manner, as soon as we

ere born, began to draw to our End, and have no
 of *Virtue* to shew. These Descriptions of the Va-
 rity and Transitoriness of human Life, are too
 vidently true, to stand in need of any Proof. Yet
 the Riches and Honours, the Pleasures and Allure-
 ments of the World, hinder Men too usually from
 considering them; and Men act, as if they were
 to live here for ever. Providence therefore is very
 kind to us, in sending Afflictions upon us to awa-
 ken us out of this Lethargy; and we should be ve-
 ry Wise and Just to our selves, if we would suffer
 our selves to be brought to serious Consideration
 by the Troubles and Afflictions of others. When
 we see others taken out of the World before us,
 we know their Case must in a short time of Ne-
 cessity be our own; and the Concern we always
 see dying Persons under, should make us endea-
 our without delay in the time of our Health and
 strength, to lay the Foundation of a good Con-
 science, against the Day of Tryal. We are sure
 Eternity can never be very far distant from any of
 us; and we are always uncertain, but it may pos-
 sibly be very near. And when Death approaches,
 sickness and Pain are alone a Burden sufficient;
 and it will require all the Helps of Reason and Re-
 ligion, all the Strength of the *Spirit of a Man*, to
 sustain at that time the *Infirmities* of Nature: But
 if the *Spirit* it self be wounded; if the Conscience
 be distracted with too just Fears; if the great Work
 of Religion be then *undone*, and yet impossible to
 be done; if the *Spirit* of the Man, which should
 support him under his Infirmary, does it self much
 more stand in need of *Comfort and Support*; who
 can bear it? This is the time when all false Colours
 vanish,

vanish, and the great Difference and Distinction of Men begins truly to appear: Now the Profane, the Covetous, the Voluptuous, the Mockers and Scoffer at Religion, begins to judge by other Measures; and if God should require some great Thing of him, would he not do it? On the contrary, the sober and pious, the righteous and just Person, reflects then with unspeakable Comfort upon his past Life, when he remembers that he has either liv'd always innocent from great Crimes; or at least that the Sins of his Youth have not been so great, as the Repentance and Obedience of his wiser Age. And when the Vail is remov'd by Death, which transmits these different Persons to that State, where they are to wait for the final Sentence of the unerring Judgment of God; they themselves will judge still more and more clearly concerning the true nature of Things, and of their own Deserts. For Death is not a total Extinction of the Man, but a Separation only of the Soul from the Body for a time. Which was the next particular I propos'd to discourse of. And here, for brevity sake, I shall put the

Second and Third Particulars into One: viz That the state of Separation, is not a state of absolute Insensibility, but, to good Men, a state of great Happiness, a being *present with the Lord*. All the *Natural Arguments*, (for the *Moral Arguments* indeed prove only a future State *in general*, by the Resurrection of the *Body*, or otherwise;) all the *Natural Arguments*, I say, which prove to us by Reason the Spirituality and Immortality of the Soul seem to prove no less strongly, that the separate State is not a state of Sleep or Insensibility.

if it is a good Argument to conclude with Cicero; I am persuaded, says * he, when I consider with what swiftness of Thought the Soul is endu'd, with what a wonderful Memory of Things past, and fore-
 of Things to come; how many Arts, how many Sciences, how many wonderful Inventions it has found out; that That Nature, which is Possessor of such Faculties, cannot be Mortal: If this, I say, be a good Argument, (and a very excellent one it is ;) it seems no less just to infer with Cyrus in Xenophon : I cannot imagine, saith † he, that the Soul, while it is in this mortal Body, lives; and that, when it is separated from it, then it should die : I cannot persuade myself, that the Soul, by being separated from this Body, which is devoid of Sense, should thereupon become it self likewise devoid of Sense : On the contrary seems to me more reasonable to believe, that when the Mind is separated from the Body, then it should become most of all sensible and intelligent. But these were only the reasonable Conjectures of wise and considering Men. The Scripture assures us with more certainty and Authority, that blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them, Rev. 14. 13. Which Rest, that is not the mere Rest of utter Insensibility, appears from c. 7. v. 9. where 'tis said, I saw under

* Quid multa? Sic mihi persuasi, sic sentio; quum tanta celeritas animorum sit, tanta memoria præteritorum, futurorum providentia, tot artes, tantæ scientiæ, tot inventa; non posse eam naturam, quæ res eas contineat, esse mortalem. Cic. de senectute.

† Ουλοῖ ἐργαγε, ἰὼ παῖ, εἰ δὲ τὸ τοῦ πάποιο ἐπειδὴ, ὡς ἡ ψυχὴ, εἰς αὐτὸν ἐν θνήσκον σώματι ἢ, ζῇ ὅταν ᾖ τῆς ἀπαλλαγῇ, τεθνηκεν... Οὐδὲ γε ὅπως ἀφραν εἶναι ἡ ψυχὴ ἐπειδὴ τὸ ἀφραν ὁ σῶμα δὲ γένηται, εἰδὲ τὸ τοῦ πέπεισμαι. Ἀλλ' ὅταν ἀκρατὸς καὶ καθαρὸς ὁ σῶμα κειδῇ, τότε καὶ φρονιμώτατον εἰκὸς αὐτὸν εἶναι. Cyrus apud Xen.

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the Altar the Souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the Testimony which they held, and they cried with a loud Voice, &c. The same thing is hinted to us by our Saviour, in the Parable of the rich Man and *Lazarus*; where the Soul of *Lazarus* is represented as carry'd by Angels into *Abraham's Bosom*, and that he was comforted in that Place, *Luke* 16. 22, 25. And more clearly yet in his Promise to the Penitent Thief, *Luke* 23. 43. *Verily I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be with me in Paradise: To Day*, that is, immediately, in the state of Separation, before the Resurrection of Christ and his Ascension into his Kingdom. St. Paul has such a Notion of the Happiness of That State, that tho' his *abiding in the Flesh* he knew was better for the Church, yet he was in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which was far better for himself, *Phil.* 1. 23, 24. And in the Text he declares; *Therefore we are always confident knowing that whilst we are at home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord; for we walk by Faith, not by Sight: We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord: The present Life he calls, walking only by Faith; the State after Death, walking by Sight or being present with the Lord.* And accordingly all the best Writers in the Primitive Times, when they have occasion to mention the State of good Men departed, always speak of them as being * *in the Place appointed for them with the Lord; as † behold*

* Εἰς τὸν ὁφειλόμενον αὐτοῖς τόπον εἰσὶ πρὸς τὸ κυεῖν. Poly
corpi Epist.

† Παύλας ὁ Σωτήρ ὁραθήσεται καθὼς ἄξιον ἔσονται οἱ ὁρῶντες
Irenæus, lib. 5.

ing our Saviour in Paradise, after such a manner as they are worthy to behold him; as being in a Place of Rest, Refreshment, Comfort and Expectation of the Completion of their Happiness at the Resurrection. Directly contrary to the Innovations of the Church of Rome, who, without any Appearance of Reason, and without any Colour of Authority from Scripture, teach that the Souls of good Men are tormented in a Purgatory of imaginary Fire, very little differing from that of Hell it self. How much better does even a Jewish Writer express himself upon this Subject! *Wisd. 3. 1. The Souls of the Righteous are in the Hand of God, and there shall no Torment touch them: In the Sight of the Unwise they seem'd to die, and their Departure is taken for Misery; and their going from us, to be utter Destruction; but they are in Peace: For tho' they be punish'd in the Sight of Men, yet is their Hope full of Immortality.*

4thly, The Consideration of the Souls intermediate Happiness in the separate State, is a great Comfort and Support against the Fear of Death: Therefore we are confident, says the Apostle, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord. It is some degree of Comfort against the Fear of Death, to consider that it is the Necessity of Nature and the Appointment of God to all Men; *Heb. 9. 27. It is appointed unto Men once to die.* It is some further degree of Support, to consider that Death is as it were the Haven of Rest, from the Storms and Troubles, the Calamities and Sorrows of the World: *Job 3. 17. There the Wicked cease from troubling, and there the Weary be at Rest; there the Prisoners rest together, they hear not the Voice of the Oppressor: The Small and Great are there,*

there, and the Servant is free from his Master ; But after all the Arguments of Comfort that can be drawn from Reason and Philosophy, Death is still the King of Terrors to Nature, and is become much more so thro' Sin. But Christ has now, to all such as truly repent, taken away that Sting, and removed the Fear ; having destroy'd him that had the Power of Death, that is, the Devil ; and deliver'd them, who thro' Fear of Death were all their Life-time subject to Bondage, Heb. 2.15. Death is now abolish'd, to all good Men, 2 Tim.1.10. and become nothing else but a Passage to a glorious Immortality. And 'tis a great Addition of Comfort and Support to consider that even That Passage it self is not a Dark Passage thro' a state of utter Insensibility ; but a being present with the Lord in some degree of Communication, and Fore-tast of a more perfect Happiness. The Pious Lady, whose Death we now lament, took particular Satisfaction in Meditating frequently upon this Subject ; and in inquiring into the full Extent and Signification of those Texts which relate to it. She made the Holy Scriptures her daily Study and Delight, and was much conversant in many other excellent Books of Piety and Devotion ; and the Comfort such Studies administer against the Fear of Death, is then truly effectual, when 'tis applied by such Persons, as are prepar'd to receive it by the preceding Course of a Holy Life. For the space of two Years, wherein Providence allotted me to perform the Duties of my Ministry in the Parish wherein she dwelt, (and wherein I receiv'd singular Civilities, particularly from that eminent Society for the Profession and Practise of the Civil-Law, which ought always

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gratefully to be acknowledged;) I was my self a Witness of her constant and never-failing Attendance upon the publick Service of God, and the Administration of the Sacrament, with the most earnest Zeal and Devotion: And, in all the Opportunities I had of observing it, her private Conversation appear'd perfectly agreeable to her religious Behaviour in Publick. Which, in a Person in the Strength and Vigor of her Age, very little exceeding 30 Years at the time of her Death, is an Example that may be recommended with Justice and Usefulness. But to enlarge too far upon Characters, even of such truly pious Persons, is neither giving any real Advantage to the Memory of the Dead, nor of so much Benefit to the Living, as exhorting them upon these Occasions to prepare themselves for Death which they are all hastening to, by setting before their Eyes continually the most perfect Example of Christ, and the Precepts of the Gospel; in following of which, all good and holy Men and Women who have gone before us, have obtain'd a good Report.

sibly and Lastly, The intermediate State of Separation, tho' a State of great Happiness, yet is by no means equal to That Happiness, which good Men shall be possess'd of after the Resurrection: *For we that are in this Tabernacle do groane, being burden'd; not for that we would be uncloth'd, but cloth'd upon, that Mortality might be swallow'd up of Life.* St. Paul, tho' he knew, that when he was absent from the Body, he should be present with the Lord, in a State of Rest and Security and perfect Assurance, in a State of great Happiness and Joy unspeakable; yet tells us, that the Crown of Righteousness was laid up for him, not to be given him by the Righteous Judge before That great Day. And our Saviour himself bids the Charitable Person expect his final Recompence, at the Resurrection of the Just. And in the Place before-cited, the Souls of the Martyrs themselves, which St. John saw in his Vision under the Altar, are represented as in a State of Expectation only; *How long, O Lord, Holy and True, &c. Rev. 9. 7. And it was said unto them, that they should*

should rest yet for a little Season, until their Fellow-Servants also, and their Brethren that should be killed as They were, should be fulfilled. In a Word; The Souls of the Righteous are doubtless as happy, as they can be in that imperfect State of Separation from their Bodies: But 'tis after the Resurrection only, that their Happiness shall be complete, and that they shall shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father: When our Lord shall have changed this vile Body, that it may be fashion'd like unto his glorious Body, according to the working, whereby he is able even to subdue all Things unto himself; That is, when This Body, which has now in it such manifest Principles of Mortality and Corruption; which consists now of such brittle and tender Parts, that every the least Violence disturbs and unfits them for their Operations; when This Body, which is now so weak and feeble, so dull, heavy and unactive, that it clogs the Soul, and retards and hinders its spiritual Operations; when This Body, which is now subject to so many Casualties, and has its Continuance depending upon the fit Disposition of so many little and easily disorder'd Parts, that 'tis a greater wonder how we continue to live a Day, than why we die after so few year's Space; shall be perfectly refin'd and purg'd from all the Seeds of Mortality and Corruption; shall spring up into an incorruptible and immortal Substance, which shall be fitted to indure as long as the Soul to which it is to be united, even to all Eternity; shall become so Strong and Powerful, so Active and Vigorous, as even to be assisting to the most spiritual Motions of the Soul, to become every way a fit Organ and Instrument of its most exalted Operations; and shall continue in this perfect Health, Strength, and Vigor forever: For God shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes, and there shall be no more Death, neither Sorrow nor Crying, neither shall there be any more Pain; for the former Things are pass'd away.

To which happy State, that we may all arrive, God of his infinite Mercy grant, &c.

FINIS,